



Brian Schweitzer
Governor

MONTANA PUBLIC DEFENDER COMMISSION STATE OF MONTANA

Richard E. "Fritz" Gillespie
Chair

NEW CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER ANNOUNCED

William F. Hooks of Helena was selected by the Public Defender Commission on February 11, 2012 to be the next Chief Public Defender of the statewide Office of the State Public Defender. Mr. Hooks grew up in Townsend, Montana. He graduated from Montana State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1981 and earned his Juris Doctorate from Gonzaga University School of Law in 1984. For several years he practiced with his father in Townsend.

In 1992 Bill became the chief attorney in the Montana Appellate Defender Office, the first statewide public defender office. During his tenure until 2000 he represented indigents in appeals and post-conviction proceedings. Notable cases include obtaining a reversal of a death sentence handed down for Ronald Allen Smith and successfully litigating a challenge to a conviction in a sex case that represents Montana's first exoneration based on the use of DNA evidence.

Since 2000 Bill has been in private practice in Helena with a heavy emphasis on criminal defense in state and federal courts. During that time he worked with The Innocence Project in litigation which led to the exoneration of Jimmy Bromgard by the use of DNA evidence. During his career he has been the recipient of several awards.

The Public Defender Commission looks forward to working with Mr. Hooks in his role as the Chief Public Defender. He will transition into the position as he winds down his private practice. His tasks as the new Chief are daunting but we are confident Bill can meet the challenges.